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AGAWAM

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Mayor's salary, term length changes considered

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – Two very important pieces of local legislation could be headed for vote at the next scheduled meeting of the Agawam City Council.

The Dec. 21 meeting, the final meeting of 2020, will feature two major actions on old business, though if the council does not agree to take a vote, it could be tabled to 2021.

Mayor William Sapelli is proposing a sizable raise for himself as well as proposing an increase

in term length from two to four years.

The mayor's salary has been a topic of controversy in past years, and a raise for the mayor's salary has been broached and turned down by the city council.

Council President Christopher Johnson, who was Agawam's first mayor 30 years ago, has favored raising the salary of the mayor due, believing it will result in more qualified and higher quality candidates for the town's top administrative position.

Richard Cohen served as mayor for 16 years before leaving the

position. Former City Councilor James Cichetti, a realtor, and Sapelli squared off in the 2017 election, and Sapelli was unopposed in the last election.

The current mayor's salary is \$85,000 per year. The salary is set by ordinance and the ordinance has no room for raises or cost-of-living increases.

The last time the mayor's salary was increased was 2008. According to City Solicitor Stephen Buoniconti, the position "falls behind other municipal positions on the rate of compensation."

"As not only a full-time posi-

tion, but a true 24/7 job," stated Buoniconti, the increase in pay will make the Agawam mayoral salary commensurate with other executive municipal leaders, whether mayor or town administrator."

Buoniconti included the salaries of the top officials in the surrounding area. Neighbor West Springfield has a mayoral term of four years and a \$130,000 per year salary. The mayor of Springfield receives \$185,000 per year. Westfield's mayor receives \$100,000. Longmeadow, Amherst, South Hadley, East Longmeadow, and

Southwick all utilize town administrators who answer to Select Boards. The salaries range from \$108,000 for Southwick to \$152,000 for Amherst.

Only Holyoke and Chicopee have comparable salaries with \$85,000 per year.

Shockingly, there are 134 employees working in the Town of Agawam who earn more than \$85,000 per year.

The council will also take up the subject of the mayor's term.

In recent years, West Spring-

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Local veteran honored



Police and other service members salute SSG Mark Johnson before beginning the procession to the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Johnson passed away recent while posted in Fort Hood, Tex. More photos of Johnson's procession are on page 12. PHOTOS BY SHELBY MACRI

Vanguard Renewables opens new facility

By Shelby Macri
smacri@turley.com

AGAWAM – Vanguard Renewables held a private ceremony to officially open and power up the Organics Recycling Facility on Dec. 3, they recorded the ceremony and launched the virtual presentation on Monday Dec. 7.

The virtual presentation is on YouTube on the Vanguard Renewable page. The Chairman and CEO of Vanguard Renewables, John Hanselman started the ceremony with remarks on the help this facility can provide for recycling expired and un-used food. This is the first facility of its kind here in Agawam, and the team at Vanguard Renewables explained that they are excited to have this opportunity.

"All this unusually food, cannot be used for human consumption, otherwise would end up in an incinerator or a landfill," Hanselman said. "Creating leachate issues, creating methane emissions, and our ability to take that food waste, take it out to a farm and convert it into renewable biogas; which either can be used for renewable

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Bright Nights to remain open later

SPRINGFIELD – Bright Nights at Forest Park has received permission from Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito to extend entry to the show until 9:30 p.m. as of Saturday, Dec. 5. The Spirit of Springfield had been allowing cars to enter Forest Park until 8:45 p.m. due to Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker's current COVID-19 order.

"It is an extra 45 minutes of holiday cheer each night during a time when it is so needed," said Spirit of Springfield President Judy Matt. "We want as many families as possible to fill their hearts with the warmth of the holiday season while staying safe in their car. We are grateful to have the opportunity to continue to make Bright Nights a holiday tradition for so many."

Bright Nights at Forest Park will operate nightly through January 6, 2021, opening at 4:45 p.m. and closing the entrance at 9:30 p.m. To follow COVID-19 safety protocols, tickets must be purchased in advance, online at brightrightsnights.org or at Big Y World Class Markets. Visitors must stay in their vehicles at all times and wear

masks when interacting with others. Restrooms are available at the entry for emergency use only.

Bright Nights' 26th season is sponsored by AAA – Pioneer Valley, American Eagle Financial Credit Union, American Medical Response, Balise Auto, Baystate Health, Big Y World Class Markets, C & S Wholesale Grocers, Charlie Arment Trucking Inc., Comcast, Eversource Energy, Gleason Johndrow Landscaping, Health New England (HNE), iHeart Media, MassLive, MassMutual, Mercy Medical Center, MGM Springfield, MP PC, PeoplesBank, The Republican, Smith & Wesson, Springfield Thunderbirds, and WWLP-22News.

The Spirit of Springfield has been collaborating with the Springfield Department of Parks, Buildings and Recreation Management since 1995 to present Bright Nights at Forest Park. The holiday lighting experience has entertained more than six million people and this year as recognized by the American Bus Association as one of their Best of the Best in their Festival and Events category.

Help a friend through 'wish box'

AGAWAM – This has been a challenging year for so many. With the pandemic, loss of jobs, health concerns and isolation, many are struggling just to make ends meet. If you know someone that may need a little help this holiday season, please submit a request to the e-mail address below, identifying their hardship and need. We will be granting three wishes this holiday season to spread goodwill and provide them with some relief during a very trying time. Perhaps it is a rent payment they are coming up short, a heating bill, food for the holidays, gifts for the children. All entries need to be submitted by Dec. 20. Once all entries are received, we will reach out to you for their contact information to provide them assistance. Please e-mail your request to: wishbox33@gmail.com.

MAYOR ■ from page 1

field, Springfield, and Holyoke have gone to four-year terms for mayor. There have been arguments for two and four-year terms. There are general beliefs that two-year terms keep elected officials more frequently accountable while the argument for four-year terms are fewer elections and more opportunity to accomplish goals.

While it is customary for measures like

these to go to a sub-committee, that will not be the case. Johnson ordered both to be moved to the next agenda for the entire council to weigh in on. If it makes it past the council, it will then go to the state legislature to have home rule legislation adopted. The mayoral term would then require a ballot vote where town voters will have a say.

VANGUARD ■ from page 1

electricity or be directly injected into the grid pipeline, is something that we are extremely excited about."

Hanselman goes on to explain that they are able to de-gas food waste and return nutrients to the soil as low carbon fertilizer. The facility in Agawam de-packages and processes expired goods, unsafe to eat food and beverage products, and off-spec batches that don't meet the quality of requirements or regulation. The extracted food will be transported to one of the farm powered anaerobic digesters that Vanguard Renewables has in Massachusetts, these food products will be combined with farm waste and converted into renewable energy.

Vanguard Renewables has six farm based anaerobic digesters, and there are five digesters in Massachusetts. Vanguard Renewables is the largest organic recycler in the Northeast and it's predicted that they will process nearly 500,000 tons of organic waste into renewable energy in 2021.

"It does so many things with regards to recycling, job creation, bringing people to our area, we are very very fortunate, very appreciative of you [Vanguard Renewables] coming out here and assisting Agawam with a facility like this." Mayor William Sapelli said.

Along with Hanselman and Sapelli, State Sen. John Velis, D-Westfield, and State Rep. Nicholas Boldyga, R-Southwick, spoke about Agawam's new facility and the opportunities of green energy that it pro-

vides. Velis expressed that it's people and businesses like Hanselman and Vanguard Renewables, that help to make the town a more green and more environmentally friendly. Boldyga thanked the Mayor and the City Councilors for spear-heading this project and addressing the renewable energy concerns and not missing an opportunity.

Other attendees included City Councilors Mario Tedeschi, George Bitzas, and Rosemary Sandlin.

They received a tour of the de-packaging operation after Mayor Sapelli flipped an oversized light switch and 'powered up' the new facility, opening a door behind the presentation space.

In a press release Hanselman said "The reception of Agawam town officials and the local community has been exceptional, and we are truly grateful."

Vanguard Renewables has received yearly awards, including the Energy Vision Leadership Award of 2020 and being the 2018 Organics Recycler of the Year by the National Waste and Recycling Association. Their digester in Hadley and their projects in Rutland and Salisbury, Vermont have also received awards and honors. The Organics Recycling Facility and property is not open to the public, though residents can visit the Vanguard Renewables YouTube page to watch different videos about the company and the facility.

Bethany to host 'drive-thru' holiday event

AGAWAM – Looking for a fun and safe activity this Christmas season? We have just the event for you! Please join us as we host "A Bethany Christmas", a narrated drive-thru Christmas experience! The drive-thru will contain displays, characters, carolers and thousands of lights, as well as live scenes, sharing a message of hope and faith. This drive-thru event is our gift to the community and is free to the

public, but we will be accepting donations which will be used to build schools for children in Latin America. The final weekend for the event will be Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, Dec. 11, 12, and 13. The times are Friday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. We hope you'll join us for A Bethany Christmas at Bethany Assembly of God, 580 Main Street, Agawam, MA.

Have Mrs. Claus read to your children

AGAWAM – Join Mrs. Claus via Zoom live as she reads children a story or two, answers questions they might have, and chats about her role as the wife to the most famous man in the world, Santa.

For a \$6 donation each child will receive: an age-appropriate holiday book, a holiday mug with a hot cocoa packet, and a note from Santa. Pick of these items will be at 55 Rowley Street, Agawam, with an arranged time.

This 30-minute Zoom call with Mrs. Claus will happen on Dec. 20 either at 11:00

a.m. or 1:00 p.m. (one time slot only) and is limited to 25 attendees per time slot. Get your entry in soon!

Ways to register/pay:

option #1 - Completed forms mailed to Stories with Mrs. Claus/AJWC P.O. Box 332 Agawam, MA 01001 with checks made out to AJWC (\$6.00 per child).

option #2 - Through the AJWC website <https://www.agawamgfwc.com/> Event page, with Google form link, payment to the AJWC via Venmo @ GFWC Agawam Junior-Womens Club

Writing contest deadline extended

AGAWAM – The Agawam Cultural Council is sponsoring a writing competition for all Agawam Public School students. The topic is "Facing the Challenges of the Coronavirus - How did you do it?" Entries will be accepted from October 15, 2020 through December 31, 2020, and the winners will be chosen by members of the Agawam Cultural Council. Monetary prizes will be awarded to first, second, and third-place winning entries. The requirements for entry into this competition can be found on the ACC website and by contacting the librarians for each of the schools in Agawam. If you

have any questions, please contact Mary Jane Augusti at (413) 241-7196 or by email to: maryjane.augusti@gmail.com.

For more information on the activities and virtual offerings of the Agawam Cultural Council during the current pandemic stay-at-home order, please visit their website, at: www.agawamcc.org.

The Agawam Cultural Council is an all-volunteer local partner of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and is funded, in part, by the MCC. The ACC is charged with bringing engaging, entertaining, and educational events and opportunities in the arts, humanities, and sciences, to children and adults from Agawam and the surrounding communities.

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Feline Friends in need of pet food

AGAWAM – Feline Friends Inc. Cat Sanctuary of Feeding Hills, MA will be holding a food/supply drive at Dave’s Soda & Pet City on Saturday, Dec. 12, 2020 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Volunteers will be accepting food, litter, treats & monetary donations for our kitties.

Feline Friends Inc. is a community-based, nonprofit cat sanctuary that does not euthanize or discriminate against any cat based on age, gender or disability.

For every \$5 donation in cash or food/treat/litter donation, those donating will receive a raffle ticket for our “Good-bye 2020” basket. The winner will be drawn

Junior Women’s Club holding decorating contest

AGAWAM – There is nothing like the holidays in New England and what better way to celebrate the season than to participate in a Holiday Event while supporting a long running service organization who gives back to the community and beyond. The Agawam Juniors invite Agawam residents to enter this contest while showing your creativity. Please consider entering this neighborly competition while having some holiday fun.

A \$10 donation is requested to enter the contest and there must be a minimum of 10 participants to run contest. Addresses will be made public. Prizes will be awarded with judges pick as Best Overall and Town Favorite by voters.

Deadlines: Entries must be submitted by Dec. 10. Entrant must leave decorations up through December 19. Completed forms (available through the AJWC website <https://www.agawamgfwc.com/>

from the entries on that date, Dec. 12.

Dave’s Soda and Pet City, a valued sponsor, is fully stocked with Friskies Pate or Shreds canned food (single flavored cases preferred), Purina Cat Chow Indoor dry food (green bag), Unscented cat litter and Temptations cat treats. All donations are gratefully accepted.

More information about our sanctuary may be found on our website at felinefriendsinc.org or our Facebook page at Feline Friends Cat Sanctuary. Contact us with questions at info@felinefriendsinc.org or by phone at 413-786-5019.

under Events) can be either mailed to Holiday Contest/AJWC P.O Box 332 Agawam, MA or submitted through the Google form link or call for pick up: Donna Shibley @ 413.519.1945.

Votes for Town Favorite must be made between Dec. 13 to Dec. 19 only.

Vote for Town Favorite is a \$5.00 donation per vote (include address of decorated home) to the AJWC via Venmo @ GFW-CAgawamJunior-WomensClub or contact D. Shibley or with the form below.

Winners will be announced via Facebook @ facebook.com/AgawamJunior-WomensClub by Dec. 23.

Proceeds from this fundraiser can support ongoing club projects including: scholarships to graduating high school seniors, support of Western MA YWCA, support of the Holyoke Soldier’s Home, support of our Holiday Baskets Program.

Rotary club holding gift auction

AGAWAM – If you could get great gifts, save money doing it, while helping your community, would you do it? We would certainly hope to. And we want to give you that opportunity.

The Agawam Rotary Club will be holding an online Holiday Gift Auction from Dec. 4 to 13. What kinds of items will be auctioned off? There will be gift certificates to a number of area restaurants. A Callaway standing golf bag. An Amazon gift card. A one-hour massage certificate. A foursome, with carts, at Agawam Municipal Golf Course. And much more. This is only the tip of the iceberg.

How does this help our community? First, it promotes local business. (If you have a business that you want us to promote through the auction, we are accepting additional auction items valued at \$50.00 or more)

It also supports the Agawam Rotary Club, which in turn supports many local endeavors, including offering 5 scholarships, totaling \$7,000 to local individuals

pursuing higher education. The club provided food for the Parish Cupboard and PPE masks for our frontline workers. We supported and hosted the Virtual Toy Exchange of the Zero Waste Club. We provide financial and other support to the Salvation Army, Junior Achievement, Agawam Robotics Education Association. And our big project for this year was providing over 100 “Comfort Kits” of stress relief and calming items for use by our students in these trying times.

Couple the benefits that your purchase at the online Agawam Rotary Club online Holiday Gift Auction can do with the possibility of scoring some bargains, and you truly have a win/win situation.

The Agawam Rotary Club is part of Rotary International. Our motto is Service Above Self. For more information about the auction or Agawam Rotary, check out the website – agawamrotary.org – or email John Barber, President, at chhengraving@cs.com

Grange holding Holiday Bazaar

AGAWAM – Community Grange #382 of Feeding Hills will hold their Annual Holiday Bazaar on Saturday, Dec. 12 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Grange Hall located at 47 North West Street in Feeding Hills. All proceeds will benefit the building fund and the public is invited to attend. Please wear a mask and practice social distancing. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes will be available.

Praise and Worship at St. John’s

AGAWAM – All are welcome and invited for a special night of Prayer, Adoration, Confession and Praise and Worship music. The event is being held to celebrate Advent. It will be held on Saturday, Dec. 12 from 7 p.m. to 8:30p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church, 833 Main Street.

Agawam High School Counseling Bulletin

Visiting College Representatives: If you are interested in meeting with College or University Representatives that will be conducting virtual visits at our school, you must sign up in Naviance at least one day in advance. Google Meet or Zoom links will be provided when you sign up.

December 9:
1:05 p.m. Husson University

Reminders:

Members of the Class of 2021 should familiarize themselves with the information that has been posted to the Post-Secondary Planning section under the Counseling tab of the High School webpage. Most recently, the Senior College Application Packet was added, which is a great resource for students interested in applying to two- and four-year colleges. https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/937652/Senior_Application_Packet_2020-2021.pdf

The COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertainty among students and families about nearly all aspects of the college admission process, including the role of standardized testing. We were scheduled to host testing in November, but did not feel it was prudent to have students from “red” area and states in our building. We looked into hosting school day testing for just Agawam students, but the next available date is in March. Due to the cancellation of SAT and ACT testing dates, more than 1,630 US colleges and universities announced they are moving to a test-optional policy, and more will surely follow. By going test-optional, institutions are making a definitive statement that they will not need test scores to make admission decisions this year. Despite the change in policies, high school students and their parents are asking, “Does test optional really mean test optional?” The answer, simply put, is: YES.

Please keep in mind that some colleges may require SAT or ACT scores for

certain majors and/or the awarding of merit money. We encourage you to contact any schools that are of interest to you (website, email, or phone) to confirm that test scores are not required for your intended major and/or the awarding of merit money.

All students should be checking their Naviance accounts on a regular basis. There is so much valuable information for all students, whether you’re headed directly into the work force, the military, or college upon graduation from AHS. If you can’t access your account, please be in touch with your School Counselor.

Open Houses/Informational Sessions/Discovery Days:

MassHire SpringfieldYouthWorks is hosting Exploring Professions in Healthcare Part II, a webinar for teens and young adults who are interested in a career in the Healthcare industry. This will take place on Wednesday, Dec. 9, from 12 noon to 1 p.m. For more information, please contact Phylis Gideon, Youth Specialist, at 413.858.2818.

Colleges and universities will be hosting information and recruitment events, in a variety of formats, in the next couple of months. Check the colleges’ websites for more information and to confirm the date and time of the event. While campus visits may look and feel different during this time, it is important to take advantage of these programs to learn as much as you can about the schools that are of interest to you.

Scholarship Information:

See your counselor or visit the websites below for more information or an application.

Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC): This scholarship program offers students the opportunity to earn their degree and receive valuable leadership and management skills while enjoying the benefits of an exciting career. Several requirements exist. The deadline for submitting an application is Dec. 31, 2020. Please visit public.navy.mil for de-

tails.

Exceptional student leaders are invited to apply for the 2021 GE-Reagan Foundation Scholarship Program. In honor of the legacy and character of President Ronald Reagan, this program annually rewards up to 20 college-bound students who demonstrate exemplary leadership, drive, integrity, and citizenship with \$10,000 renewable scholarships (up to \$40,000 per recipient). More information is available at reaganfoundation.org. Applications will be accepted online until Jan. 5, 2021.

The 2020 Profile in Courage Essay will be offering a first-place prize of \$10,000, a second place prize of \$3,000, and \$1,000 for five finalists. The maximum word count is 1,000 with a minimum of 700, not including citations and bibliographies. The deadline for submission is Jan. 15, 2021. More information is available at jfklibrary.org/essaycontest

Berkshire Bank’s NeXt Gen Scholarship Program is now accepting applications for the 2020-2021 cycle. Through the program, 40 students will receive a \$2,500 scholarship. These will be awarded to students who have exemplified community service through their volunteer efforts, have been successful academically, and have financial need. The application deadline is January 31, 2021. Learn more at berkshirebank.com/scholarships

The Jackie Robinson Foundation Scholarship application is now available! This foundation provides four-year scholarships of \$30,000 and extensive support services, including guidance and internship placement, to highly motivated African American students. The application closes at 5 p.m. on Feb. 1, 2021. Learn more at jackierobinson.org

Big Y Scholarship applications will be accepted through Feb. 1, 2021. The program awards over 300 scholarships each year, totaling more than \$250,000. All Big Y Scholarships recognize academic merit and achievement. Applications are available only online at bigy.com.

Tenaska, founded in 1987, is a private-

ly held energy company committed to being good neighbors in the communities where its plants are located. To express that commitment, scholarships are offered through the high schools located in the counties with plant operations (Berkshire Power Company in our area). Applicants must be a 2021 graduating high school senior who plan to attend a two- or four-year post-secondary education program at an accredited institution. The scholarship amount is \$1500, and applications, which are available at Tenaska.com/scholarship-form, are due no later than Feb. 12, 2021.

The Asian Pacific Community Fund (APCF) has multiple scholarship awards to give to eligible high school seniors. The application on the website is not yet open, but is expected to go live on Nov. 20. Applications are due no later than Friday, April 2, 2021. More information is available at apcf.org/scholarships

The American College Foundation (ACF) is offering a Visionary Scholarship, with multiple winners selected to each receive between \$1,000 and \$5,000. The application process is quick and easy and financial need is not considered. All may apply. The application is available at AmericanCollegeFoundation.org and the deadline is May 1, 2021.

The Wisegeek Entrepreneurship Matters Scholarship is a \$500 scholarship open to students with an entrepreneurial spirit. While not required, the program will look for candidates with a track record of overcoming challenges and a penchant for continuous growth. Applications can be completed in less than two minutes and are due by May 1, 2021. wise-geek.com/entrepreneurship-matters-scholarship.htm

The creators of the “Student Award Search Aid” website are offering the B. Davis Scholarship for 2021. Please visit studentawardsearch.com/scholarships.htm to read about the program and to apply for the scholarship. The amount of the award is \$1,000 and the deadline is May 24, 2021.

Opinion

OUR VIEW

Term and salary does need change

Everyone has their own opinion of what the mayor's salary and term length should be, and yet again, it is time for the Agawam City Council to consider whether or not to make a change to this salary.

Throw my name into the hat of options that could be chosen to consider.

First, the mayor's salary:

In a normal job environment, especially if you belong to a union, you receive regular raises and/or cost-of-living increases. A number of department heads also receive raises as part of their contract, or get raises when they sign new contracts.

Now, an \$85,000 salary for a mayor of 28,000-plus people when department heads and non-department heads are making more than that is abysmal. However, there is something to be said about "earning" your raises.

Having a tiered salary system for Agawam's mayor would be a fine solution. For example, and this not a formal proposal, say the mayor is elected for the first time. In Year 1, he would receive \$90,000. In year 2, he would get a slight increase, say \$92,500. If that mayor is re-elected, that is an obvious endorsement from the people that he or she is doing a good job. Well, in "Year 3," the mayor's salary would move up to \$95,000. Since an ordinance sets the mayor's salary, an ordinance could include a gap at how much the mayor could make, and provisions for mayor who lost the job, but got it right back (see Mayor Cohen). But a tiered system would allow the election process to serve as a barometer as to whether a mayor should continue earning raises.

Being the mayor, while an elected position, is still a job. And Solicitor Buoniconti makes a solid point that it is a 24/7 job. It requires a lot of time, a lot of nights, meetings, appearances, and stress. Mayor's should have the opportunity to earn increases in pay, even if they are small.

Now, on to the mayor's term length:

As stated in story on the subject, the prevailing arguments are that two-year terms keep elected officials accountable and four-year terms allow those officials sufficient time to establish their administration and achieve goals.

The solution is right in the middle, three-year terms.

Three-year terms are not common among mayors, especially in Western Massachusetts. Mayors in the area have terms of either two or four years. Many Select Boards, however, have three-year terms attached to their positions.

Three years is long enough for a mayor to establish an administration and attempt to accomplish goals, and not too long to have to go with crummy leadership if voters want to make a change.

The only downfall is a three-year term would require some elections to be held in even-numbered years, which would be overshadowed by presidential and gubernatorial elections, as well as major congressional elections.

Hopefully, the city council will vote in favor of moving the mayoral term limit change forward, if for no other reason than to gauge how the people feel about it.



Letters to the Editor

School district not fully transparent in COVID-19 handling

Dear Editor:

In the Advertiser's main story last week, the mayor and the superintendent make their case that the town and schools are following best practices in their approach to handling the COVID-19 pandemic; and that concerned community members are advocating for the whole district to move to remote learning. With all of the back and forth on this topic, I can see why they think that, but I believe they are mistaken in their assessment. For myself and the concerned citizens I have spoken with, it's less a matter of method of schooling, and more one of meaningful transparency. For example, in that article, they state that "the custodial crew is able to do a deep clean every night." On paper that sounds reassuring, but nowhere do they operationalize what is meant by "deep clean," nor do they identify the number of custodial staff responsible for conducting this cleaning. Given that our district has 8 public school buildings (including

the ECC), it would be helpful to know how many people and work hours are allocated to each building to accomplish this deep clean every night. I have had reports from people in different buildings about the same piece of debris that has been on their floor for the past 2 weeks. It is difficult to reconcile the idea of nightly deep cleans with that of classrooms which haven't even been swept.

Another example of transparency which is not meaningful is the aggregate reporting of weekly COVID cases in schools. As of 12/4 the district webpage reports that there are 11 active cases in the school community, 6 of which are remote only students. If the 5 remaining cases are spread across 5 different schools, that's one thing. But if those cases are all in one small school, that's another matter entirely. The article asserts that "the town doesn't notify the whole community" of positive COVID cases in schools "because it involves the medical records of others."

Yet certainly there is a middle ground between not notifying the community of which buildings have positive COVID cases and disclosing name, address, and date of diagnosis of the person. The Southbridge school district was somehow able to notify their community, including impacted buildings, when they learned last week of 2 positive cases, while also noting that neither student had any "close contacts". This is more information than is currently available to Agawam families.

Meaningful transparency also means being honest about shortcomings in the protective measures in place. The mayor and superintendent note that testing is not required just because a student or staff member was in the same space as someone who tested positive for COVID, nor is it required if they suspect they may have COVID-19, but that those individuals are required to quarantine for 14 days before they can return to the building.

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YESTERDAY'S HOMETOWN NEWS

Eddie Neilson '41

Appropriate for 2020, Robert Healy, president of the AHS class of 1941, quite well predicted the future for himself and his classmates in his oration: "Difficult though the next few years will inevitably be, in spite of the sacrifices they may demand, we of the Class of '41 believe that our educational training will enable us to face resolutely these trying years. Through the public schools and your efforts, we shall be soldiers of democracy in the heart as well as well as in uniform." Six months after Healy's graduation we were bombed at Pearl Harbor and right in WWII.

You probably knew some 41's. Maybe it was Tom and Kathy Ennis's mom Frances Arnold. Or maybe Paula, Glenn, Tom and Paul Tatro's mom Lucille Letendre. How about Sherry and April Royer's mom Lorraine Hawkes who grew up at 140 School St. I have probably driven by that home about thirty thousand times, maybe more. There may be other '41 girls I have met or knew their children but girls change their last names and are tough to follow.

How about a few '41 boys: Charles Calabrese, Vincent Caroleo, Harold Clark, Phil DeForge, Al Mutti, Ralph Oliver, Ed "Porky" Ramah and John Zielinski. Sound familiar to you? Surely many of

those names and other 41's are on the plaques at Veteran Green in front of Phelps School.

Geraldine Balboni, '41 wrote the poem titled "In Ourselves Our Future Lies." She hit the nail on the head.

Many years ago I became a friend of '41 Joe Pisano. He and my dad's neighbor Bob Strniste picked me up one night to go to see the Brownie wrestling team in their match at Ludlow High. Might have been 1992. What a memory. In the car with Joe Pisano who broke the Western Mass scoring record in the 1940 football season. What a pleasure to hear stories Bob and Joe told me on the way back and forth. I should have had a pen and a notebook. Now twenty-eight years later

the stories are gone but having been there will last in my mind for, hopefully, a few more years.

When Joe took the football to run over and through the unfortunate opponents, he was handed the ball by classmate quarterback Ed Neilson whose daughter Nancy called me many years ago. She thought her dad would be a good story for the column so I arranged to meet Eddie at McDonald's. He came, scrapbook under his arm, and we talked for an hour and a half. We became friends that



Walt Willard
Guest Columnist

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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In-person culinary arts classes resume at HCC

HOLYOKE – Every good cook knows some recipes call for a slow simmer, others a rapid boil.

Without stretching the metaphor too far, seven culinary arts students at Holyoke Community have in a way been on a slow simmer themselves since March, when their first-semester schedules were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

They had just completed their seven-week introductory cooking course, Culinary Fundamentals I, and were supposed to start Culinary Fundamentals II after spring break. Instead, the campus shut down and the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute temporarily closed as the college transitioned to remote instruction.

But it's tough to learn a proper sear or sample braised quail over Zoom, and, so, their first semesters were put on hold until the fall.

And then, on Oct. 28, after a seven-month hiatus, the teaching kitchens at the Culinary Arts Institute reopened, and the students were back at their stations. Since then, they have been progressing, if you will, at a rapid boil through a series of accelerated, back-to-back classes designed to catch them up before the spring semester begins on Jan. 25, 2021.

"It's definitely exciting to get back in the kitchen into a somewhat normal routine, doing what I love and learning," said student Monica Hernandez.

Hernandez and her classmates recently completed what would typically be a seven-week course, Culinary Fundamentals II, in just 2½ weeks, thus concluding their long-delayed first semester in a two-year journey toward their associate of science degrees in culinary arts.

They started their reconfigured second semester on Nov. 16 and are already halfway through their Pantry and Garde Manger course, which will be followed immediately by Stocks, Soups and Sauces.

"Classes are very fast paced," said Hernandez, who lives in Westfield.

The pace will accelerate even more during HCC's 10-day January Wintersession program. Students will be in the kitchen Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m.

to 4:30 p.m., completing two classes in two weeks, Baking and Pastry Arts, and Entrée Preparation and Presentation.

All HCC classes that meet in person must be approved by the college's Return to Campus Task Force. The majority of HCC classes are still being conducted remotely.

"Just like in Health Sciences, everybody with labs – we've all had to rethink how we're running our classes," said chef and culinary arts professor Warren Leigh. "They said, think outside the box. Well, we did. As long as everything keeps going the way it is, we're going to be done with semester two on January 15 and they'll be ready to join some of the other students for semester three classes in the spring."

In addition to the fast-track schedule, other accommodations were made, such as reducing the number of students in each section.

"We can really do six to seven, but we're keeping it at six moving forward," said Leigh. "The six stations are perfect for social distancing and whatnot. All the classes set up for winter and spring we're capping at six, knowing that nothing is going to be normal for a while."

General precautions around health and safety have been elevated in and around the kitchen on account of COVID-19.

"We get our temperatures taken as we walk in the building," said Hernandez. "Multiple stall restrooms are now single use only. We can only use the dish room one at a time. We have assigned stations. We use the same dishes for every class and we wash them ourselves so each of us has contact only with the dishes we use every day. We are a lot more mindful of personal space, contact and germs. We wash our hands frequently. I find myself washing my hands a lot more."

Of course, they all wear masks, but that does make it more difficult to be heard and understood in a busy commercial kitchen.

"Wearing the mask has really proved that we need a kitchen voice to be able to talk to each other," said Hernandez. "It's really important to pay attention and listen closely."



Monica Hernandez of Westfield pan sears a chicken breast during her Culinary Fundamentals II class at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute in early November. SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Chef Warren Leigh samples vegetable rice prepared by student Caroline Ortiz of Agawam.

ARREST LOG

The Agawam Police Department responded to 330 calls for service from Nov. 30 to Dec. 6 and recorded the following arrests. No arrests in the public log have been omitted. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty.

Wednesday, Dec. 2

David Russell Johnson, 62, of 19 Rest Way, Springfield, was arrested at 10:52 p.m. for assault and battery, and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

LETTER ■ from page 4

On the surface this seems like a reasonable position to take, but it leaves out the fact that contact tracing is only triggered by a documented positive test result. Therefore, if a student or staff member goes home sick on a Monday with COVID like symptoms and chooses to quarantine without testing, the town has no way of confirming if they were negative or not and the contact tracing process will never be triggered.

All of the reassurance that the mayor and superintendent sought to provide with their article rings hollow because the district refuses to be transparent about the limitations on the protective measures. Perhaps if the district was upfront about

the underlying logistics, people whose concerns are fueled by a lack of information would be better able to share their confidence in the safety of the in-person classroom, and trust that we do have all of the information we need to make an informed decision about whether to pivot our student to remote or submit their name for return to hybrid learning. The administration is asking the community to trust them, but without meaningful transparency, we have no way to know if their reassurance is anything more than empty promises meant to make the mayor look good in an election year.

Catherine McDougal

HOMETOWN ■ from page 4

day and I will never be able to thank Nancy enough for a phone call that changed my life. I learned in the next few years that Eddie was a war hero who fought in the Battle of the Bulge, the same battle that claimed my Uncle George. Eddie and I never talked about the war except for one time when I asked him if he ever ran into our General Creighton Abrams. I was expecting Belgium. France, Germany, something like that. Sure he did. He was pumping gas in Feeding Hills Center one day and so was Creighton.

Eddie had a career as a salesman for Armour Meats in Springfield. About six

weeks ago I sat in his living room and he told me the names of seven markets in the North Adams area that he sold to and said aloud which street each one was on. Eddie was 97 years old and still mowing his own lawn. His 1940 team has been inducted into our Hall of Fame in 2016 and he told everyone at the banquet how grateful he was to have played football at Agawam High for Harm Smith.

Sadly, Eddie fell in his bath tub in early November. At his Suffield funeral service I wore an orange and brown Agawam jacket and couldn't help thinking how one phone call had changed my life.

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CLUES ACROSS

- Skateboarders love them
- Popular sports podcast (abbr.)
- Former Ohio State great Michael
- Not dirty
- Earth goddess (Greek myth.)
- A Spanish river
- Pig meat (French)
- Famed astronomer
- Floating ice
- Broadcast
- Aquatic mammals
- Some are bath
- Hip hop trio
- NY Giants' #56
- Small European viper
- Neither
- Multiple Tony-winner Rivera
- Loud noise
- Second year high schooler

CLUES DOWN

- Proof of purchase (abbr.)
- Soap ingredient
- Blackbird
- Single steps
- Tin
- Books have lots of them
- Made of fermented honey and water
- You can get it in a bed
- Room for communal meals
- Early Syrian kingdom
- Provokes dry amusement
- Use with "thou"
- Mollusk
- Grain storage units
- Not a car, not a truck
- Ooze
- N. Vietnamese ethnic group
- Tennis pros group
- Something that's not what it's purported

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- to be
- E. Indian trees
- Beloved December holiday
- Regions
- Metric unit of length
- Peter's last name
- Beige
- 18-year period in astronomy
- Where golfers begin
- Basketball stat (abbr.)
- Frocks
- Soda comes in it
- On approval
- Trims by cutting
- Small finch
- Language Bura-__
- Nothing
- Imbecile (British)
- Tropical Asian plant
- Abba __, Israeli politician
- Small freshwater fish
- Indicates position
- Data processing



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Scarf donations sought

AGAWAM – Loaves and Fishes is in desperate need of White socks, Scarves, Hats and Gloves. Most especially since COVID-19 hit us all last March, the number of folks in need of extra help in our communities has increased dramatically. You may bring your generous donations to the Sacred Heart Parish Center at

1061 Springfield Street in Feeding Hills. There will be a basket in the entry way just as you come through the first set of doors. Donations will be accepted through February 2021. Please call Pastoral Minister Deb Brancesco RN with any questions at 786.8200 ext. 3.

Celebrating the winter holidays safely during COVID-19

Staff report

SPRINGFIELD – It's the gift that keeps on giving – COVID-19 – but it's not a present you want to give or receive this Christmas.

"The risks of contracting the coronavirus leading up to Christmas and afterwards are even greater than they were for Thanksgiving because of all the traveling, shopping and parties associated with the holidays," said Dr. Armando Paez, chief, Infectious Disease Division, Baystate Medical Center.

"The greatest gift you can give someone this holiday season is to protect them from getting the virus," he added.

Dr. Paez noted that the world has already been gifted with an early present – several vaccines to fight the coronavirus.

"While we expect great promise from these vaccines, the difference they will make in our return to some semblance of normality will not be felt until sometime next year, perhaps not until mid-year or the fall season," he said.

Yet, despite the good news about the vaccine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is forecasting that there could be an estimated 9,500 to 19,500 deaths the week of Christmas alone.

Travel

Who doesn't want to be "home for the holidays?"

But, once again as they did for Thanksgiving, the CDC is advising against travel for the upcoming winter holidays, including Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Las Posadas and more.

"Travel may increase your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19. Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others," cites the CDC as cases are rising, hospitalizations are increasing, and deaths are increasing.

For those who must travel, the CDC recommends being tested for COVID-19 before and after your trip. They advise getting a test one to three days before travel and another three to five days after travel, as well as reducing nonessential activities for seven days after travel. And for those who do not get tested, the CDC recommends reducing nonessential activities for 10 days after travel.

Parties/Gatherings

The message hasn't changed much when it comes to partying for Christmas, whether in someone's home or at the office – if you must – the smaller the better and outdoors if possible (not always possible in New England). And, of course, if you do party, wear a mask and socially distance, noted Dr. Paez.

In Massachusetts, according to an order from Gov. Charlie Baker, indoor gatherings at private residences are limited to 10 people and outdoor gatherings at private res-

idences are limited to 25 people.

"To be honest, it's going to be hard to socially distance in a party atmosphere and enjoy it at this same time. Also, If just one person isn't wearing a mask, that's a problem. And, where alcohol is involved, you're much more likely to let your guard down where safety is concerned," said Dr. Paez.

As for your celebrations with family and friends, the CDC says the safest way to celebrate the holidays is "at home with people you live with."

Visit the CDC's website, cdc.gov, for a full article on "Holiday Celebrations and Small Gatherings," which explains the risks of holidays gatherings and offers tips on how to stay safe.

Shopping

As Thanksgiving approached, the CDC recommended not going shopping in crowded stores, a suggestion which still stands as coronavirus surges are even greater now than around Thanksgiving.

Also, the White House COVID-19 Task Force recently noted the country is "at a very dangerous place and the COVID risk to all Americans is at an all-time high," stating "everyone over 65 with significant health conditions should avoid public places if possible and wear a mask when leaving the house."

"As much as possible, use curbside pickup if shopping or shop online," said Dr. Paez.

"These are hard decisions to make around the holidays at a time when family is everything and getting together is so important. But, there is light at the end of the tunnel thanks to the vaccines we are now seeing, and the sacrifices we make this year can keep everyone safe until we can all be together once again next year," added Dr. Paez.

Whatever way people choose to celebrate Thanksgiving, Dr. Paez reminds everyone to follow some common-sense safety precautions that public health experts have been recommending since the start of the pandemic to keep you and others safe from COVID-19:

- Wear a mask
- Social distance staying at least six feet apart from anyone not in your household
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- And don't go out when feeling sick and avoid contact with those who are sick.

For more information on Baystate Health, visit baystatehealth.org.

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INSP. IQF FROZEN **COOKED SHRIMP 31/40 COUNT** 2 LB BAG..... **\$14⁹⁹** ea

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Grant deadline approaching soon

AGAWAM – With a mandate to distribute state monies via a grants process, the Agawam Cultural Council is seeking grant requests from local community-oriented programs in arts, humanities and sciences in need of funding. The Agawam Cultural Council FY2021 grant season started Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020 and has been extended to Monday, Dec. 14, 2020 as the post-mark deadline for organizations, schools and individuals to apply for grants that may support or provide cultural activities for the Agawam community. According to Council spokesperson Bob Kadis, these grants can support a variety of artistic projects and activities in Agawam -- including exhibits, festivals, short-term artist residencies or performances in the schools, workshops, lectures or historical interpretation.

Notably, the Council also encourages funding requests from schools and youth groups to cover ticket and transportation costs for field trips for school-age children.

For more information, Local Guidelines and FAQ's can be found at this site: <http://www.mass-culture.org/Agawam> by clicking on the "Council Priorities" tab.

Information about the ACC's Grants program can also be found on the ACC's own website at: agawamcc.org.

The FY2021 allocation amount has not been determined as of this writing. But what we do know there is \$3,300 of unencumbered funds left over from the FY2020 grant season. The MCC FY2021 allocation plus the unencumbered funds will make up the total grant amount for FY2021. The total grant amount will be posted on our website when we know it. Note, the MCC FY2020 allocation was \$17,200.00 and when added to the FY2019 \$615.00 unencumbered funds made for an available total grant amount of \$17,815.00 for FY2020.

If you have questions about the online application process, you may contact the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Lisa Simmons at 617-858-2707 or at lisa.simmons@state.ma.us -- or ACC chair Bob Kadis, at 413-789-4814 or at r.kadis@comcast.net.

An online application process will become available Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020. The Agawam Cultural Council will not accept paper applications. To apply for a grant, please visit: <http://www.mass-culture.org/Agawam> and click "Apply Now."

Springfield Garden Club hosts virtual tour of holiday decorations

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Garden Club will host "Decked Out for the Holidays" presented by Jana Milbocker of Enchanted Gardens on Friday, Dec. 18 at 11:30 a.m. The event will be virtual and will be accessible via Zoom.

If you love holiday decorations but cannot see them in person this year, take a virtual tour! We

will visit Blithewold, Newport Mansions, Winterthur and Longwood Gardens sumptuously decorated and lit for the holiday season.

Jana Milbocker is a garden designer, speaker, and author. She combines horticulture, design, and

travel tips to educate, inspire and delight both new and seasoned gardeners. Jana loves to visit gardens and historic sites in the U.S. and abroad, and share her trips through her books, photos and blog. She published The Garden Tourist: 120 Destination Gardens and Nurseries in the Northeast in 2018, and The Garden Tourist's New England in 2020. She has lectured at flower shows in Mass., Conn., Maine, New York and New Jersey, as well as a multitude of horticultural societies, garden clubs, and libraries in the Northeast. She is owner of Enchanted Gardens, a landscape design firm in the Boston area. (EnchantedGardensDesign.com.) She is past president

of the Holliston Garden Club, and active in the Garden Club Federation of Mass., Massachusetts Horticultural Society and GardenComm International.

The club is also offering an online holiday boutique and auction featuring quality gift items and holiday arrangements. Proceeds from the holiday boutique and auction allow the club to offer:

- Educational outreach to youth in our region.
- Fresh flower arrangements for patients in nursing homes,
- Creation and maintenance of public gardens around the city

For a link to the auction site, please email your name and phone number to spfldgardenclub@gmail.com.

The presentation is open to the public as well as club members via Zoom.

Tickets for guests are \$5 and are available at EventBrite.com.

For more information on this and other Springfield Garden Club events go to www.gcfm.org/springfieldgardenclub or visit them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SpringfieldMAGardenClub/>



Six Flags normally has a holiday event, but it will be modified this year due to the pandemic. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Six Flags holiday event ongoing

AGAWAM – The most wonderful time of the year kicks off on select nights starting November 27 with Holiday in the Park Lights!

We will be open from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Holiday in the Park Lights will feature a one-way path with more than one million dazzling lights, beautifully adorned Christmas trees and an extraordinary synchronized light display.

Holiday in the Park Lights jingles weekends and select days this holiday season and reservations are required! All guests will review our enhanced safety opening procedures while making their reservations online.

While the property's world-class rides and attractions will remain closed for the 2020 season, Six Flags New England is thrilled to welcome guests back to the park and warm their hearts this holiday season on this whimsical light trail that is over one mile long!

Tickets are only \$19.99 or free of charge to Members and Season Pass Holders

Holiday in the Park Lights is free of charge to all Members and Season Pass holders. Or enjoy single-day tickets for \$19.99.

We are following direction from the CDC and local officials and are operating at a limited capacity. It's very important that you make an advance reservation; failure to do so will deny entry to the park.

Simply click the link below and follow these steps:

Find your park

Select your ticket

Be sure to purchase parking (as it won't be available to purchase at the park. Members and Pass holders with free parking are all set)

Select your date and time

Checkout and you're done.

We are so excited to see you and appreciate your cooperation as we regulate new protocols during these times.



There will be Lights in the Parks beginning Nov. 27.



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SPORTS

BASKETBALL

Jump balls eliminated, close contact limited in basketball modifications for this winter

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – Modifications for boys and girls basketball have been released and the game will look a little different, though significant limits to fan attendance will restrict how many can see the different-looking game.

In Western Massachusetts, the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference has decided the first practices will not take place until Jan. 4. Several other areas of the states are following suit. With no playoffs scheduled for the winter season, the various regions have the flexibility to decide when schools will begin and end play.

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association has set a Dec. 14 date as the soonest teams can start practicing. Several Central Massachusetts schools will start practicing then with

contests likely to begin right after the new year.

One rule that will be consistent throughout all sports is the mask mandate.

Participants must wear masks or face coverings at all times will participating in practices or games. The one caveat is that all schools have the ability to designate areas where athletes can take “mask breaks.” There will be areas designated for those breaks, especially during basketball games where players going up and down the court many times wearing a mask may need to catch a breath when the whistle blows. Because of the close contact involved with playing basketball, there was no way to play the sport safely without masks being worn.

The game will see modifications, but nothing too drastic and more along the way the timing, and setup of the game. Gameplay will be largely similar though

different ideas were discussed to maintain distancing.

Like many other sports, the pre-game will be simplified. Only one captain will meet with the referees prior to the game. Starting lineups will likely be announced, but the traditional “high-five” lines will not be allowed, along with handshakes with the opposing coach.

There will be emphasis during game play to enforce rules about freedom of movement and closely guarding opposing players. Defenders are not allowed to impede practice of offensive players, and will enforce the five-second rule on players who are being closely guarded.

The jump ball will be eliminated in favor of a simple coin toss to give possession of the ball to one team. Alternating possession will then prevail like the rest of the game typically does.

Free throws will look a bit dif-

ferent with just four players allowed with the shooter. Normally six players are allowed. When a player is awarded two or three free throws, they will shoot alone until the final shot to limit the time players are in close contact.

One bigger chance that affects the end-of-game strategy for teams is the “intentional” fouls used to try and gain possessions for a team that is trailing. A team will looking to intentionally foul for that purpose will inform the referee of that intention, and then lightly tag the player with the ball upon inbound. The referee would then blow the whistle.

Jump balls will be whistled quicker in order to limit close contact.

Rosters are limited to no more than 15 players and three coaches on the bench, though many teams do not carry more than 12 or 13 players. The MIAA is also strongly discouraging

SOCCER

Academy team joining Pioneers organization in 2021

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW — The Western Mass. Pioneers will be adding a USL Academy League soccer team in 2021. The New England Mutiny are also in the process of forming an Academy soccer team.

Both Academy soccer squads, which will be playing their home matches at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow, will be made up of the top U16-U19 prospects from the Western Mass. area.

“In club soccer, you’re limited to certain age groups,” said Joe Ferrara, who’s the owner of the Mutiny and the new Pioneers General Manager. “An academy soccer team allows talented players to play for one team regardless of their age.”

The Pioneers had about 50 players try-out for the Academy League team in November.

“The Academy League team is a new program that we’ve added this year,” said Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. “Our main goal is to develop the best local soccer players from Western Mass. to hopefully play for the Pioneers in the future.”

Molinari, along with the Pioneers assistant coaches will be coaching the Academy League team in 2021.

“We wanted to have the same coaching staff for both the USL 2 team (Pioneers) and the USL Academy team,” Molinari said. “We want both of the teams to play the same type of style. I do like coaching the younger soccer players.”

The plan is for the boys’ Academy League team to play their home matches prior to the Pioneers matches. Both teams will also be traveling together to road matches.

The boys’ team will be competing against eleven other teams in the Northeast Division of the USL Academy League.

Molinari has been coaching the Pioneers, who are the defending Northeast Conference Champions of USL League Two, since 2012. The Pioneers weren’t able to play any matches in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

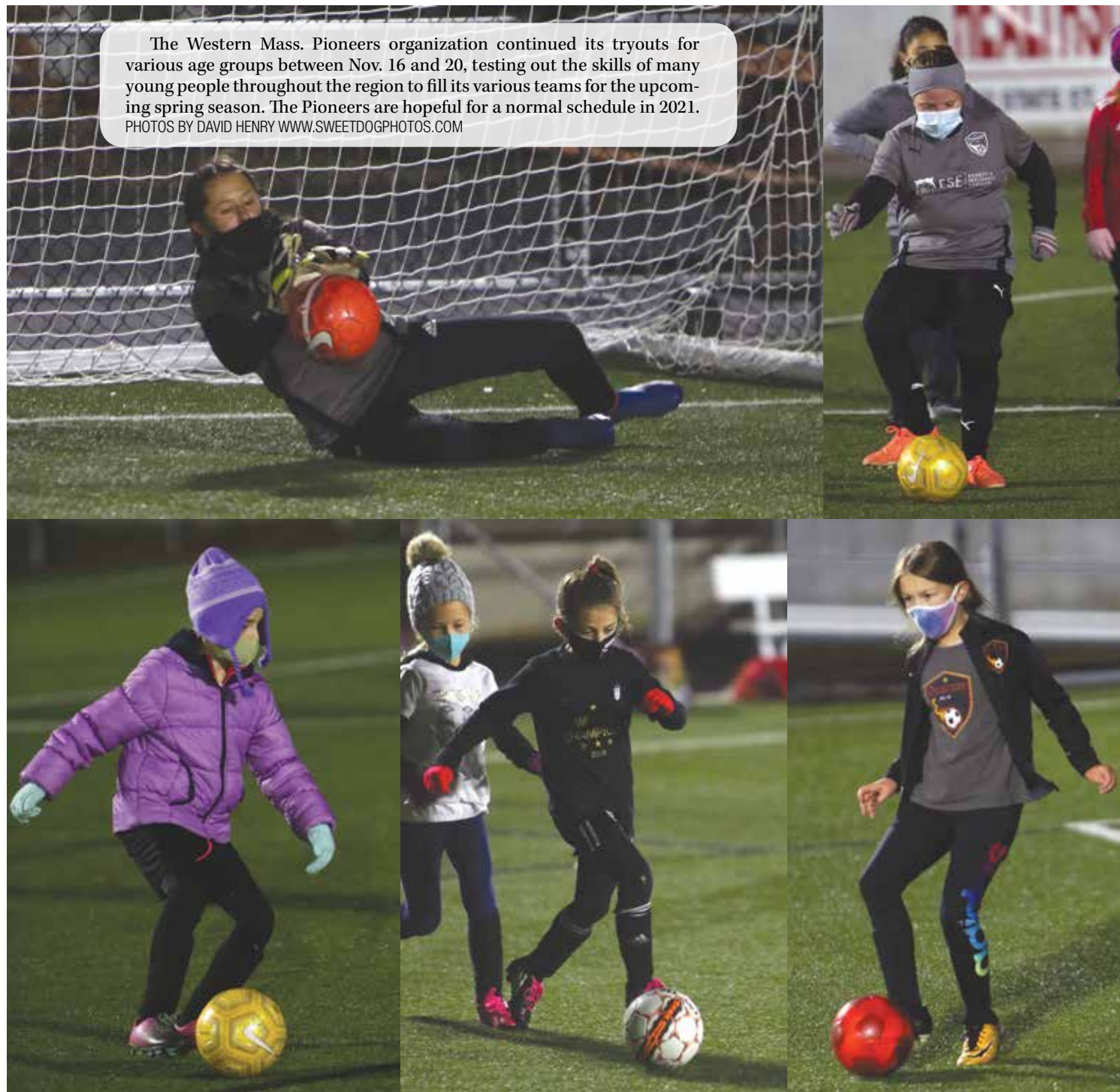
The Pioneers did not suffer any losses during the 2019 regular season. They lost in conference finals and qualified for U.S. Open Cup, which wasn’t held last summer. The Pioneers also qualified for the league playoffs in 2016.

“I really enjoy coaching the Pioneers and it was painful not being able to compete in any matches last year,” Molinari said. “We won our Division title in 2019 and it was our best season since I’ve been coaching the team. We’re

TRYOUTS

Pioneers tryouts conclude

The Western Mass. Pioneers organization continued its tryouts for various age groups between Nov. 16 and 20, testing out the skills of many young people throughout the region to fill its various teams for the upcoming spring season. The Pioneers are hopeful for a normal schedule in 2021. PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Sports

Star Speedway announces 2021 schedule

EPHING, N.H. – Star Speedway's 2021 schedule includes multiple major events, a full slate of weekly racing series divisions ready to race for a championship and the thrills and spills of staple shows to begin and end the season.

Fans will get a taste of Supermodifieds, Late Models, Modifieds, Midgets, Super Late Models, Trucks, Street Stocks and more over the course of more than 22 events of racing from April through October.

The schedule is headlined by two events for the Tri Track Open Modified Series (May 29 and July 24), including a new Memorial Day weekend show and the 10th annual SBM Classic in July. The 56th annual Star Classic returns, with a three-day show from Sept. 17 to 19, while there are countless other special events including memorial races and extra-distance shows planned. The Granite State Pro Stock Series is back at Star for two dates -- May 8 and a new Sunday special as part of the Star Classic weekend, Sept. 19.

Continuing tradition, the season begins with the Spring Bunny Brawl on April 24, and ends with the two-day Howler weekend, Oct. 23 and 24. Star will give teams, drivers and fans one week off each month

during the season, with off nights scheduled for May 22, June 12, July 17, Aug. 28 and Sept. 4.

The J&S Paving 350 Supermodifieds will continue to honor some of the best of the past at Star Speedway, with six special events as part of their 10-race schedule for 2021. A champion will be crowned on Sept. 11. Major memorial events planned include the inaugural Dennis McKennedy Memorial race as part of the Star Classic:

Bob Webber Sr. Memorial (May 15)
Jen Garland Memorial (June 19)
Krupski Cup (June 26)
Marco Turcotte Memorial (July 24)
Jim Belfiore Memorial (Aug. 14)
Dennis McKennedy Memorial at Star Classic (Sept. 18)

The Ken Izzett Construction Late Models are back with their own nine-race slate, headlined by an Independence Day weekend special on July 3, a 75-lapper, and a 100-lap feature on Aug. 21. The Late Models will also return to the Star Classic, this year as part of a Friday slate. The Late Model champion will be crowned on Sept. 11.

The MLM Diagnostic Fast 40 series return for the Woody's Street Stocks as part of the division's 16-race schedule. There will be four races in the 40-lap series (April 24,

May 29, June 26 and Aug. 7), while the season will begin at the Bunny Brawl and end with the title battle on Sept. 26. The Street Stocks will continue to run their 50-lap race to end the season at the Howler, Oct. 23.

The EXIT Realty Pro Truck Series rumbles into the New Hampshire oval for two dates of their own, slated for events on Aug. 7 and Star Classic Sunday, Sept. 19. The North East Mini Stock Tour returns to Star three times -- including dates on June 5, Aug. 7 and Sept. 26. The annual NEMST 4 Cylinder Nationals main event will be run during their September date, moved from Classic weekend.

Two Wild And Whacky Wednesday night races are set for June 23 and Aug. 4, with both nights showcasing 4 and 6/8 Cylinder enduro races. The Six Shooters join the June show, while the August race is headlined by the Mia's Jewelry Boutique Slingshots and spectator one-on-one drag races. NELCAR returns to Star with their Legends Cars division in 2021, with dates on May 8 and Saturday, Sept. 18.

The three-day Star Classic will honor the late Bobby Webber Sr., beginning on Friday, Sept. 17, headlined by a 100-lap race for the Modified Racing Series, joined

by the Late Models, Pure Stocks and Slingshots. On Saturday, the day full of winged warriors is back with the ISMA 125, Dennis McKennedy 350 Supermodified memorial, NEMA Midgets, NEMA Lites and NELCAR Legends Cars. On Sunday, the weekend ends with a 100-lapper for the Granite State Pro Stock Series, races for the EXIT Trucks, Classic Lites, Street Stocks and Six Shooters.

The Six Shooters will run 13 races, headlined by the Don & Aline Coster Memorial (July 10) and the Liz Paradise Memorial (Oct. 23). The Slingshots are set for 14 battles of their own, with a 40-lap special scheduled for part of the Aug. 4 show. There are 13 races for the Pure Stocks, races for the Classic Lites, and multiple enduro races for the 4, 6 and 8 cylinders.

The track will hold two swap meets -- one to start the season on April 17, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., and one in the fall, a two-day special on October 30 and 31 from 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The 2021 schedule is subject to change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information visit Star Speedway at StarSpeedwayNH.com and follow the track on social media.

T-Birds make donation to cancer-related charities

SPRINGFIELD – On Nov. 30, the Springfield Thunderbirds' Foundation announced \$4,000 in donations to local cancer-related charities to cap off a successful Hockey Fights Cancer campaign during the month of November. Donations will be made to local cancer-related charities, including: Center for Human Development's Cancer House of Hope, Survivor Journeys, American Cancer Society - Relay for Life, Mercy Medical Center - Sister Caritas Cancer Center, and the national non-profit, Hockey Fights Cancer.

This season's campaign looked quite different from previous years. Typically, the Thunderbirds would host a Hockey Fights Cancer themed game at the end of November, complete with specialty lavender jerseys that are worn by the players and auctioned off after the game. This year, however, the campaign was activated on social media. Throughout the month of November, the Thunderbirds collected names on social media from fans for people they "fight for." New Valley Bank & Trust committed to donate \$5 for each submission received to the Thunderbirds' Foundation, for the first 500 submissions for a remarkable \$2,500 total donation. The names were then added to Hockey Fights Cancer placards that were placed on the windows leading to New Valley Bank & Trust's newly renovated headquarters in Monarch Place in downtown Springfield.

"As we take down the placards we are re-

vealing our brand new headquarters location", said Jeff Sullivan, President and CEO of New Valley Bank. "We have been inspired by the personal messages of hope as we have been completing our construction on the other side of the glass. There are heroes all around us, from our friends and family fighting cancer to the work that the Thunderbirds and others do to alleviate hunger in the community. We at New Valley continue to be very optimistic about the return of the vibrant culture of downtown Springfield as we begin to see vaccine distribution and economic resurgence in 2021."

In addition to the contribution from New Valley Bank, the Thunderbirds also collected monetary donations on their foundation website, as well as holding a specialty game-worn jersey raffle from previous Hockey Fights Cancer games. The grand total generated through these campaigns equaled \$4,000.

"Hockey Fights Cancer has been an incredibly important cause for our organization and across the AHL and NHL," said Thunderbirds President Nathan Costa. "Even though our season hasn't technically started yet, it was important to keep the cause front and center in our community, and we thank New Valley Bank & Trust for stepping up during this difficult time. We are grateful to all who supported the cause by purchasing a raffle ticket, making a donation to our foundation, or simply submitting a name of someone that you fight for."



Thunderbirds Managing Partner Paul Picknelly, New Valley Bank & Trust President and CEO Jeff Sullivan, Thunderbirds Mascot Boomer, Thunderbirds President Nathan Costa, and Thunderbirds Vice President, Sales & Strategy Todd McDonald. SUBMITTED PHOTO

PIONEERS ■ from page 8

now thinking about the 2021 season."

Ferrara gave his thoughts about adding a girl's Academy team for the Mutiny.

"We're looking for the top girl's prospects in the area to play for the girls academy team next year," he said. "The age group will be similar to the boy's side. The girl's academy team will probably have one or two older players."

The girls Academy team will be playing home matches before the Mutiny.

Jill Serafino is going to be the head coach of the girls academy squad.

Serafino is currently the Mutiny General Manager and is an assistant coach. She's

also an assistant coach for the women's soccer team at Springfield College.

The Mutiny, who celebrated their twentieth anniversary in 2019, played all of their home matches at Lusitano Stadium for the first time.

The Mutiny also finished the 2019 regular season without a loss. They lost to the Lancaster Inferno in the United Women's Soccer Eastern Conference finals.

For more information on either Academy soccer teams please contact Joe Ferrara at jferrara@wmpioneers.com or 413-330-9775.

Senior photos from fall season wanted

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

The fall season is nearing its end and Turley Publications has been all over the action.

But with this unpredictable season there have been temporary or in some cases, permanent stoppages in play, and we still want to help feature your athletes, especially those who are seniors this year.

We continue to ask for help on this season in order to bring the best coverage we can possibly manage and fill our

pages with names and color.

We know that fans will be limited to the home crowds, but that is where you all come in.

If you attended any senior games and would like to see those photos in our papers, we welcome submitted photos from those events and information about graduating seniors who participated in Fall 1 sports.

We also welcome any additional information about other major achievements. Send any and all information and photos for inclusion to sports@turley.com.

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The Petitioner requests that: **Susan McCausland** of Oak Ridge TN be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in an **unsupervised** administration.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 12/28/2020.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE

MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: November 23, 2020
Suzanne T. Seguin
Register of Probate
12/10/2020

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD20P1996EA
Estate of:
Charles F Simard
Date of Death: 10/13/2020
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Thomas Simard** of Feeding Hills MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Thomas Simard** of Feeding Hills MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in an **unsupervised** administration.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 12/18/2020.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate,

including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: November 20, 2020
Suzanne T. Seguin
Register of Probate
12/10/2020

PUBLIC HEARING AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL
The Agawam City Council will hold a public hearing on **Monday, December 21, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.** in the Auditorium at the Agawam Junior High School, 1305

Springfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear the petition of Agawam Mayor William Sapelli on a zoning amendment to Chapter 180, Section 147 of the Code of the Town of Agawam (TOR-2020-6). Any member wishing to provide testimony during the Public Hearing on TOR-2020-6 may do so by dialing 1-978-990-5187 and using access code 8476635 followed by # sign. If you plan to testify at this public hearing, please email Barbara Bard at bbard@agawam.ma.us before 5:00 p.m. to register. Calls must be made at 7:05pm

to provide testimony. This remote public hearing will be live-streamed on the Town of Agawam's website at www.agawam.ma.us and will also be televised on Cable Access Channel 15. TOR-2020-6 is available for public inspection by emailing the office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us

BY ORDER OF:
Christopher C. Johnson
President of the City Council
12/10/2020

Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.

How to submit legal notices

All legal notices to be published in the Agawam Advertiser News should be sent directly to notices@turley.com. Please indicate the newspapers and publication date(s) for the notice(s) in the subject line of your email. For questions regarding coverage area, procedures or cost, please call Jamie Joslyn directly at 413-283-8393, ext. 216.

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TOWN OF WILBRAHAM P/T Emergency Dispatcher & P/T Recording Secretary. Looking for a reliable P/T Emergency Dispatcher & P/T Recording Secretary. For application and more information please visit www.wilbraham-ma.gov. Application deadline 12/31/20. EOE

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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

Read your local newspaper online at www.newspapers.turley.com

Johnson laid to rest in hometown



AGAWAM – A funeral procession was held last Wednesday for SSG Mark Johnson. Johnson, an Agawam graduate, passed away recently and was returned home to be laid to rest in the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Ceremony right in town.

Jeanne Goodsell, Wendy McAnanama, Jolene Mercadante, Pamela Weingart, Cher Collins, and Maria Yacovone of the Library across from Curran-Jones Funeral Home, held printed flags to show their support during the procession.



The procession started with a Police detail in the lead and a group of motorcycles close behind.



Motorcyclists follow after a Curran-Jones car in the procession.



Many more cars followed in the procession of SSG Mark Johnson, as people showed their support along the road.

